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NEWS RELEASE

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IDAHO COULD SHIP HIGH-LEVEL WASTE TO YUCCA YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Legislation introduced in the United States Senate today will allow the Department of Energy to ship high-level nuclear waste in Idaho to the Yucca Mountain repository years ahead of schedule.

Idaho Senator Larry Craig is an original cosponsor of legislation introduced by Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Pete Domenici to expedite shipping nuclear waste in Idaho to Nevada. The legislation allows for Department of Defense spent fuel and high-level waste, including waste currently stored in Idaho, to be shipped to Yucca Mountain for interim storage and eventual disposal well ahead of the 2035 deadline stipulated in the 1995 settlement agreement between the State of Idaho and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Sen. Craig said, “This bill will speed up shipment of spent fuel and high-level waste out of Idaho and assures the Idaho National Laboratory’s continued leadership in the development of dependable, emissions-free nuclear power for this country. Sen. Pete Domenici deserves the credit and my gratitude for being a courageous supporter of nuclear energy and for crafting this important piece of legislation. This bill clears the path for new nuclear power in this country, and it integrates recycling and disposal of fuel for the first time.”

The Nuclear Fuel Management and Disposal Act:

- Establishes interim storage at Yucca Mountain for defense spent fuel and high-level waste and legacy fuel that cannot be reprocessed;
- Provides for the construction of infrastructure at the repository site, including an interim-storage facility and a railroad (necessary for shipping Naval fuel currently stored in Idaho);
- Withdraws from public use 147,000 acres of land needed for the repository at Yucca Mountain – a requirement for Yucca to receive a license – as well as land needed to build a railroad to the site;
- Repeals the arbitrary statutory limit on waste that can be disposed at Yucca Mountain, allowing the true capacity of Yucca to be determined through scientific and technical analyses;
- Takes the Nuclear Waste Fund “off budget” so that money from the fund can be used to build the repository – the purpose for which it was intended.